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*The Baby**Bela L. Pratt*

Memorial Exhibition of the Work of Bela Lyon Pratt

*Born at Norwich, Connecticut, Dec. 11, 1867; died in
Boston, May 18, 1917*

THE life of Bela Lyon Pratt was from boyhood devoted uninterruptedly to the art he loved. At sixteen he entered the Yale School of Fine Arts, and at twenty became the assistant of Augustus Saint Gaudens in New York. At twenty-three he went to Paris, spending two years at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and winning medals and prizes. At twenty-six, a year after his return, he was appointed Instructor in Modelling at the School of this Museum. Mr. Pratt continued in this position until his death, in his fiftieth year, on May 18 last.

The extent and variety of the work which Mr. Pratt was able to accomplish within his short life and in addition to continuous duties of instruction appears in the selection from his sculptures now shown in the Renaissance Court. The exhibition includes, beside marbles and bronzes, casts and models in plaster and clay, with photographs of some of the sculptures in permanent positions elsewhere.

The early figures of Orpheus and the Tiger (1895) and Orpheus (Salon 1898) are an index of Mr. Pratt's instinctive response to the ideal impressions received during his years of discipleship in France. To this imaginative domain he returned whenever the claims of reality allowed, and in it he accomplished some of his last works, the unfinished group of Cupid Blinded, and the notable statue of the Archer, also unfinished. But while the figures of Orpheus would be at home in the Luxembourg Gardens, all the later products of his free fancy are purely American, idealizations of American youth, and above all of the young American woman. In praise of her delicacy and elegance in form and feature and of her refinement of soul, there came from his hand a series of statuettes in which she wears different guises, as *Reflections* (1900), *Youth*

(1904), *River Nymph* (1908), *Echo* (1912), or appears in her own person as in the *Young Girl* (1914) bought by this Museum, or in the novel group of the mother and baby (1916) illustrated above. Luxuriant lines like those of her hair in the *River Figure* (1904), the *Young Mother* (1911, at Worcester), *Echo* (1912), and *Spring* (1915), he seemed especially to delight in; and this charm is perhaps the secret of his interest in representations of water. He imagines Saint Christopher (1913) struggling with his burden toward the shore in a boiling breaker. In *Upstream and Downstream* (1911) he represents the fight of a man and the surrender of a woman in the grasp of a tumultuous and powerful current. Mr. Pratt's pleasure in mobile and fluid forms manifests itself also in several groups for fountains.

*Bust of Henry Lee**Bela L. Pratt*

An important part of the commissions accomplished by Mr. Pratt were portrait busts, reliefs and medals. The early portrait-group of the Slater children (1894) is a bit of playground realism represented in shallow relief and happily composed within rectangular limits. The list of portraits, large and small, which he afterward completed includes many names well known in Boston and New England. To have produced what must surely remain as the standard image of Phillips Brooks (1899) is in itself no small title to the gratitude of the future. The bust of Henry Lee (1902), illustrated on the previous page, exhibits a minute care for characteristic detail that recalls the fifteenth century sculptors of Florence. Like them Mr. Pratt worked as goldsmith on occasion, as his designs for the half and quarter eagle (1908) testify.

Of Mr. Pratt's work in relief upon ideal motives this city has two examples: the frieze on the front of the Opera House (1909), with its airy figures gracefully composed, representing Drama, Music, and the Dance; and the two figures of Sculpture on the Fenway front of this Museum (1914). An earlier commission for medallions and spandrels for the Library of Congress at Washington (1895) is represented in the exhibition by photographs.

Commissions for larger works, in part or wholly ideal in subject, occupied much of Mr. Pratt's time and labor. The earliest of these, two colossal groups contributed to the Columbian Exposition in 1893, and the figure of Philosophy in the Rotunda of the Library of Congress (1895) are not represented in the exhibition; but sketches or models of a number of other heroic figures are shown: the figures for the Manufacturers and Liberal Arts Building at the Buffalo Exhibition (1901), the figure of the Soldier Boy at Saint Paul's School, Concord (1903), the statue of Governor Win-

throp, at New London, Connecticut (1904), the figure of the Soldier Prisoner, erected at Andersonville, Georgia, for the State of Connecticut (1907), the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument at Bell Rock Park, Malden (1909), the group in memory of Army Nurses at the State House (1912), the figures of Science and Art at the Public Library (1912), the Whaleman in an angle of the Library at New Bedford (1913), the statue of Edward Everett Hale in the Public Garden (1913), that of Nathan Hale in front of Connecticut Hall, Yale College (1914), the figure of Nathaniel Hawthorne at Salem (1916) and that of Alexander Hamilton, at the Art Institute in Chicago (1917).

This record, although incomplete, witnesses the remarkable fecundity of Mr. Pratt's brain and hand throughout his whole career, but especially during his later years. Three years before his death he had planned a monument which would have been his most ambitious composition,—the memorial to Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, the Teacher-President of Argentina, proposed as a gift from the Republic to the City of Boston. True to his fondness for water, Mr. Pratt designed this monument as a ship of state impelled by the strong arms of many civic virtues over a quiet sea, the statesman at the helm. The small model shows the shape which this conception had begun to take in his mind.

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Note

THE QUINCY ADAMS SHAW COLLECTION was opened to the public on April 18. A Catalogue of the collection, listing and illustrating all the works of which it is composed, is sold at the Museum or sent postpaid for fifty cents. The Catalogue is prefaced by a sketch of the donor of the collection, with portraits of Mr. Shaw and of Millet.

Accessions, January 1 to April 4, 1918



Book-cover

Persian

Harp, French, eighteenth century

Persian book-cover

Classical Art. Three gold coins and one silver coin	Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Ropes.
Egyptian Art. Four bronze statuettes	Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Ropes.
Necklace	Gift of Miss Louise M. Nathurst.
Paintings. Landscape: sketch by Charles François Daubigny	Gift of Mrs. Josiah Bradley.
Landscape: water-color by Peter de Wint ..	Gift of Mrs. Julia Isaacs.
Western Art. Gold medal by Bela L. Pratt	Gift of Dr. Charles W. Eliot.
Set of amethyst jewelry; French chatelaine;	
Swiss watch; Algerian shawl pin; two pairs	
of andirons; small table, Colonial	Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Ropes.
Small wooden loom	Gift of Miss Mary Woodman.
Bronze statuette of John Burroughs, entitled	
"Summit of the Years," By C. S. Pietro	Gift of Mrs. James M. Curley.
One hundred and sixteen pieces of jewelry;	
two spoons	Gift of Miss Louise M. Nathurst.
Seventeen coins	Gift of Mrs. John H. Morison.
Three silver punch ladles	Gift of Miss M. H. Jewell.
English porcelain cup and saucer, Spode (?) ..	Gift of Miss Lucy W. Burr.
	Gift of William Lindsey.
	Gift of Denman W. Ross.